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Citation

Authors' objectives
The aim of this report was to investigate the clinical effectiveness of epidural steroid injections (ESIs) in the treatment of sciatica with an adequately powered study and to identify potential predictors of response to ESIs. Also, to investigate the safety and cost-effectiveness of lumbar ESIs in patients with sciatic.

Authors' conclusions
Although ESIs appear relatively safe, it was found that they confer only transient benefit in symptoms and self-reported function in a small group of patients with sciatica at substantial costs. ESIs do not provide good value for money if NICE recommendations are followed. Additional research is suggested into the epidemiology of radicular pain, producing a register of all ESIs, possible subgroups who may benefit from ESIs, the use of radiological imaging, optimal early interventions, analgesic agents and nerve root injections, the use of cognitive behavioural therapy in rehabilitation, improved methods of assessment, a comparative cost-utility analysis between various treatment strategies, and methods to reduce the effect of scarring and inflammation.

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